

## Anxiety

It's diving headfirst into  
the ocean, fearlessly,  
and finding as you rise  
that a wave as tall as  
a house is only inches  
from your face,  
no time and nowhere  
to run, so in the blink  
of an eye you take the  
deepest possible breath,  
plunge once more into  
the sea, and remain there,  
waves crashing endlessly  
above your head, and  
slowly but surely that  
deepest possible breath  
is not enough and so you  
fight with all your fleeting  
might against the foam in  
hopes of reaching the  
surface before your one  
breath of air  
runs out.

## You in Place of Me

How nice it would be,  
I used to think,  
to take sip by sip of rum  
and down some pills,  
to go to sleep one night  
and not wake up.  
How good it would be,  
I used to think,  
to just be done with it all.  
But then I stopped  
to put your name  
in place of mine,  
and I was hit with waves  
of fear  
and loss.  
And so I chose  
a life of pain  
and long, sad days  
so I could get  
to be with you a while.  
I locked the pills up  
in a box on the top shelf  
and hid my keys  
and tried to shut my brain off.  
But still, it comes.

## Well

An exclamation, used  
to express a range of emotions,  
from surprise to anger to resignation,  
to mark the end of a conversation,  
as in “well, I guess I’ll  
let you go then,”  
to express reluctant agreement,  
as in “well, I guess we can,”  
to anticipate an answer or  
explanation as in, “well?  
What do you have to say for yourself?”

Also, a verb:

To rise to the surface and spill,  
or be about to spill,  
as in the tears in my eyes  
when he says “well, I guess  
I’ll let you go then.”  
For emotions to rise  
and become more intense,  
as in the jealousy that  
wells up inside when I see him  
with anybody else.

As an adjective, meaning  
in a satisfactory state  
or in good health,  
as in how I say “I’m well”  
when he asks me  
how I’ve been  
but we both know  
it’s a lie,  
he’s well enough aware  
that I’ve never been well  
as long as he’s known me.

As an adverb, very probably,  
in all likelihood, as in  
well, this may well be  
the beginning of the end.

Ambedo

Gazing up at the clouds or the stars,  
I ponder all that is and could be—  
love, death, the lives of people in passing cars,  
gazing up.

A year from now, or maybe three,  
He and I, lying hand in hand, gazing up at Mars,  
discussing all that is and could be.

Someday, a child will be ours  
and she will ask us about all that is and can be—  
love, death, and the lives of people in passing cars,  
gazing up.

To Kaine, with Love

When we first met,  
I was but a bud  
and you the rising sun.

You soon became the drops of rain,  
the beams of light that helped me grow.

Now I stand, a sunflower,  
tall and proud, with golden petals  
and a strong stem all my own.

Or am I a rose?  
Pretty, pink, and delicate  
with thorns that cut like knives.

No matter what I am,  
you will forever be  
the earth which keeps me grounded,  
the sun which lets me live.